

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 04833 01 OF 02 281620Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----013659 281621Z /45

O 281554Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4564
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 04833

EXDIS

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PDEV, RH, UK
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: APPROACH TO BRITISH ON NEGOTIATING
STRATEGY

REF: STATE 79045

1. FOREIGN SECRETARY IS AWAY FROM LONDON.
EMBASSY OFFICER ACCORDINGLY DIS-
CUSSED REFTEL WITH JOHNNY GRAHAM TUESDAY MORNING.
GRAHAM HAD ALREADY RECEIVED COPY OF REFTEL TALKING
POINTS WHICH THE SECRETARY HAD GIVEN AMBASSADOR JAY
IN WASHINGTON.

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2. GRAHAM SAID HE COULD NOT GIVE AN OFFICIAL REACTION
TO OUR PROPOSALS UNTIL HE HAD SEEN OWEN, AND OWEN IN
TURN WOULD LIKELY WANT TO CONSULT THE PRIME MINISTER
WHO DOES NOT RETURN HERE FROM THE STATES UNTIL THURSDAY.
HMG MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO GIVE US A RESPONSE UNTIL SHORT-
LY BEFORE THE PRESIDENT'S ARRIVAL IN LAGOS. EMBASSY
OFFICER EMPHASIZED THE URGENCY WE ATTACH TO RESPONDING

TO THE OPENINGS PRESENTED BY THE FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS
OVER THE WEEKEND.

3. GRAHAM THEN EXPRESSED HIS MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE
MOTIVATIONS OF THE FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS. HE SUSPECTS
THE FRONTLINE IS URGING AN ACCOMODATING STANCE ON THE
PATRIOTIC FRONT IN ORDER TO TIE US TO ONE SIDE OF THE
CONFLICT. ONCE AQREEMENT IS REACHED WITH THE PATRIOTIC
FRONT, THE FRONTLINE WILL THEN DEMAND THAT WE GET RID
OF SMITH AND HIS INTERNAL GOVERNMENT. EMBASSY OFFICER
STRESSED THE DANGERS WE WOULD RUN IF WE IQNORED WHAT
THE FRONTLINE IS APPARENTLY OFFERING. THE RISK OF DOINQ
NOTHING NOW SEEMS FAR GREATER THAN THE RISK - WHICH
HARDLY SEEMS IMMINENT - THAT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WILL
ACCEPT OUR PROPOSALS IN DETAIL. IF OUR ONLY ALTERNATIVE
IS TO LEAVE OUR PROPOSALS ON THE TABLE, THEN THE FRONT-
LINE'S ONLY ALTERNATIVE IS TO ESCALATE THE FIGHTING.

4. GRAHAM REPLIED THAT WE HAD NOW ARRIVED AT THE POINT
FORESEEN IN THE STRATEGY WE AGREED TO LAST JULY. AT
THAT TIME WE SAID IF WE COULD GET AGREEMENT BY ALL THE
PARTIES TO OUR FAIR PROPOSALS, FINE; IF SOME COMBINATION
OF NATIONALISTS PICKED UP ELEMENTS OF OUR PROPOSALS,
THAT ALSO WAS FINE. IN LARGE MEASURE, HE SAID, THIS
IS IN FACT WHAT HAS HAPPENED. AS FORESEEN, WE HAVE
THE "HIGH GROUND" AND WE SHOULD AVOID FORFEITING THAT
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POSITION BY APPEARING TO SIDE WITH ONE GROUP AGAINST

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ACTION SS-25

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ANOTHER. EMBASSY OFFICER SAID THAT TO IGNORE THE PATRIOTIC FRONT NOW PRESUMES THE SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERNAL AGREEMENT, A POSITION WHICH AT BEST WOULD BE PREMATURE. WE COULD END UP ISOLATED ON THE HIGH GROUND.

5. GRAHAM WONDERED WHETHER THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WOULD AGREE TO MEET AT THE OFFICIAL LEVEL, AND EVEN IF THEY DID, WHETHER THEY WOULD NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY AT THAT LEVEL. NO REAL CONCESSIONS WOULD BE LIKELY BELOW THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL. EMBASSY OFFICER REPLIED THAT AN EFFORT TO ARRANGE A PRELIMINARY OFFICIALS MEETING HAD BEEN FORESEEN BY MACHAL (MAPUTO 371) AND WOULD AT LEAST TACTICALLY BE RESPONSIVE TO THE FRONTLINE. GRAHAM ALSO QUESTIONED WHETHER THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WOULD CONTINUE TO INSIST THAT EXCLUSIVE CEASE-FIRE TALKS MEANT TRANSI-
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TIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AS WELL AND WHETHER THE FRONT WOULD AGREE PUBLICLY THAT A SEPARATE MEETING WITH THEM WOULD PRECEDE AN ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE. EMBASSY OFFICER REPLIED THAT EXPLORING THESE PROBLEMS WOULD PRESUMABLY BE TWO OF THE PURPOSES OF AN OFFICIAL LEVEL MEETING.

6. GRAHAM SAID HE WOULD LET US HAVE THE OFFICIAL REACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

BREWSTER

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